

VZCZCXRO2737  
PP RUEHFK RUEHKSO RUEHNAG RUEHNH  
DE RUEHKO #1000 1200126  
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FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2672  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUCPDOG/USDOC WASHDC PRIORITY  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY  
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INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 3795  
RUEHNH/AMCONSUL NAHA 6133  
RUEHNAG/AMCONSUL NAGOYA 1449  
RUEHKSO/AMCONSUL SAPPORO 4332  
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 7597  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 9076  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2837  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 5095  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 4882  
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - NORTH KOREA AND PRESIDENT OBAMA

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Top stories on Thursday morning included the death of an infant in the U.S. as a result of the H1N1 influenza, as well as yesterday's summit in Beijing between Prime Minister Aso and Chinese Premier Wen.

¶2. "DPRK Plays Up Crisis to head off UN sanctions" A correspondent for the liberal Tokyo Shimbun reported from Seoul (4/30): "North Korea's latest brinkmanship represents its frustration at the Obama administration having failed to respond to the April 5 missile launch by agreeing to direct talks.... With Kim Jong Il being in poor health condition and North Korea wishing to minimize domestic confusion in the run-up to the selection of his successor, Pyongyang is very keen to hold direct talks with Washington."

¶3. "President Obama Should Not Worry about Being Criticized as 'Weak-Kneed'" The liberal Mainichi's editorial writer Fuse argued (4/30): "President Obama appears to be successful in rectifying the U.S. reputation in the world, which was tarnished under the Bush administration. However, American public and international trust in him would plunge if he fails to deliver on his campaign promises. His determination to put election pledges into practice will be tested. He needs to dismiss criticism raised by conservatives of him being 'weak-kneed' in making peace overtures toward Iran.... Given the paramount importance of Iraq becoming a stable country and the U.S. reconciling with the Islamic world, Washington's dialogue with Tehran is critical. As a country that respects religious spirit, the U.S. must overcome 'allergy to Islam,' which has deepened following the Iranian Revolution in 1979."

ZUMWALT